

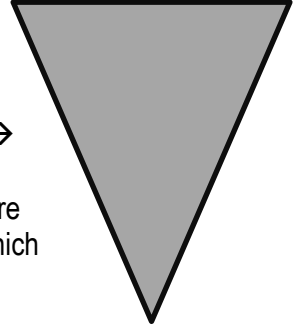
## Writing an Introductory Paragraph for your Social Studies/Language Arts Research Paper

### “BASIC” MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS:

- ✓ should have an “attention getter”—something that immediately catches or engages your reader’s attention (you want them to keep reading, don’t you?)
- ✓ **NEVER** directly states, “I’M GOING TO TALK ABOUT...”
- ✓ must be at least 5-7 sentences.
- ✓ must introduce your paper’s main focus (the person, the place or the era you researched).
- ✓ must provide any necessary “background knowledge” readers will need to know to better understand your specific subtopics your paper will discuss later.
- ✓ must end with a thesis statement.

### Where- How do I begin?

Think of your introductory paragraph as an inverted (upside down) pyramid like the picture to the right. → Start with the widest part of your paper’s focus, *i.e.* the most broad, general information about it. As you get closer to the “tip” of the pyramid (closer to the last sentence), your information should get more and more specific. The very “tip” will be the narrowest information—that will be your thesis statement, which directly introduces the three subtopics of your paper’s body.



### Your introduction paragraph should answer or discuss the following questions:

1. (What is the most exciting or interesting fact, statistic or quote you came across in your paper?)  
Use this as your “ATTENTION GETTER” (your first sentence!)
  - a. **Example:** “Did you know that...?”
2. (What “focus topic” did you choose?)
  - a. NOTE: Your first sentence of your paper should include the name of your person/place/era.
3. Why did you choose this focus topic?
  - a. **Example:** “I chose to research this topic because.... and ....” ← Explain!
4. Before you researched this person/place/era, what did you know about this topic?
  - a. **Example:** “Before researching, I only knew Michelangelo as a Ninja Turtle. I didn’t realize he was an Italian Renaissance man.”
5. Why is this person/place/era important to history? (The answer to this is your THESIS STATEMENT.)
  - a. **Example:** Michelangelo was an important artist during the Italian Renaissance time period because of his/her active early life, spectacular life achievements, and lasting impact after death. \*Note! This thesis example was written by following the thesis “formula” for a person.